



The Clock Strikes Twelve

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The Paradine family has gathered to celebrate New Year's Eve. Alas, when the clock strikes twelve old Mr. James Paradine, the patriarch, is found murdered. Yet, he seemed to invite his demise when he accused a family member of disloyalty. Now, Miss Silver must unravel the mystery of troubled love and sudden death.

The Clock Strikes Twelve Details

Date : Published February 22nd 1996 by HarperPrism (first published 1944)

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Author : Patricia Wentworth

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From Reader Review The Clock Strikes Twelve for online ebook

Jennifer Heise says

there's a pattern in Patricia Wentworth, though this plot is better than usual/

Betsy says

While the mystery wasn't bad, the annoying habits of some of the characters lessened my enjoyment. Irene was especially annoying, and Miss Silver's pointed cough set my teeth on edge.

Jaline says

The structure of this mystery is done so well. The first (roughly) 40% of the novel is the introduction of characters, the background to who they are and how they relate to each other, and – the murder itself. Because yes, there is a murder. We can see it coming, not as inevitable, but as something one hopes will not happen and makes us sad when it does.

The next 10% is where the police investigate, where it is established as murder, and where everyone who was possibly connected to it is interviewed. Some have alibis, some have invented alibis (which does not necessarily make them guilty), and some later recant and change their story. This doesn't help the case much as no-one is going to confess, for it is a hanging if they do. In this stage, there were very few suspects that I was willing to exonerate.

Then, Miss Silver is called into the case and during the last 50% of the book, she uses her exceptional mind, mild-mannered demeanor, and governess skills to sift through the debris, sort out the remaining tiny puzzle pieces, and put them together sufficiently well to allow the invisible, missing pieces to be filled in.

I could go on about how crystal clear the writing is, and what a joy it is to spend time with Miss Silver and her great sleuthing skills, but I will leave it to you to read some of Patricia Wentworth's Miss Silver books and decide for yourself!

Susan says

New year's Eve 1941 and the Paradine family and their relations are sitting around the dining table when the head of the family Mr James Paradine announcing that a crime has been committed and he knows that it was one of the family, and he wishes the guilty to admit this by midnight.

When James Parridine is murdered Miss Maud Silver in invited to try and solve the crime.

A nice intriguing mystery.

Bryn (Plus Others) says

I have read some of Wentworth's novels before, but the last time was before I tracked things on Goodreads, and it was all what I could find on paper from the library. Now I can find almost all of her books as ebooks and I am enjoying settling down to reading those I couldn't find before & rereading the rest. This one was a reread but I did not remember it much at all; it is a decent cosy mystery but a bit forced & obvious in some places, and Wentworth is using a particular type of heroine (rather than the detective, Miss Silver, more on whom below) which I find to be dull. This type of heroine is pretty, not too modern, cares very much about staying in line with the morals expected of her class, is only of average intelligence and education, and tends to go pale and huge-eyed as soon as the mystery ensues. It's a type she moves away from as she continues writing, whether due to her interests changing or due to her read of modern women and the marketplace, I have no idea -- but anyway, this book has one of these dull heroines and so I find it less enjoyable than many.

Carol ?? says

My vision while reading this was that I was in an old black & white movie. I could hear the crackle of the film as I watched the action unfold on the screen. & there we were with a dinner party of what turn out to be all the suspects & The Future Corpse doing everything short of putting a sign that says "**Murder Me!**" on his back. The crime happen & as usual in the Golden Age crimes, no one wastes too much time on lower class actions like grief.

It's all moving along at a very pleasant, if somewhat cliched pace. But then Miss Silver arrives. This ex governess puts any suspect who has a tendency to prevaricate into the Naughty Chair, while others feel they are back in the nursery & Nanny Will Fix Everything. This reader felt much the same & the tone & pace of the book much improved upon her arrival.

All came to a satisfactory conclusion & just when it was about to come to an end (view spoiler)

Not a world beater, but very satisfying & while I'm not in a rush to read another Wentworth, I definitely will at some point.

Kay says

The familiar Miss Silver plot here--big family and patriarch sets a trap and it springs on the wrong person. Psychological twists here, and thwarted love, and greed for control of a person rather than money.

Michael Stewart says

There have been comparisons between Wentworth's Miss Silver and Christie's Miss Marple. After reading this, my first Miss Silver mystery, I'd posit that Miss Silver is more realistic, but certainly not as much fun. Also, Patricia Wentworth is much more serious, even though the Christie tropes are here: upper class twits, country houses, money and murder. I think this novel very well written, but thin on plot: family gathering,

patriarch suggests there is perfidy afoot, then patriarch perishes. Yet it's all so THIN...

Published in 1944, *THE CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE* sets the scene quite well. It offers a glimpse of Brits coping with rationing, in Miss Silver's more urban milieu. We, these many years later are not used to deprivation. I thought this interesting as it was the norm when this book was set and published. But the events and characters in the country house are less realistic - more of the problems of people who actually have "drawing rooms" and servants.

In total, nothing much to see here. Well done, for sure, but still rather thin.

Renee Robinson says

The Clock Strikes Twelve by Patricia Wentworth:- The era is a time during te World War 1. The clock rings in a New Year at midnight just as someone is murdered. There are more than a few unlikeable personalities running around within this book. It kind of makes the reader wish they would all get picked by the police just for being the nerve-racking menaces which they are.

A party takes place on News Year. This reminds me of a Sherlock Holmes mystery of "Who done it". A house holiday celebration. A budding romance. A murder at midnight. A room full of sour relations who are suspects. Although, the mystery is a typical spin-off of classic murderous fiction, the plot is well written in the Wentworth style. Eventually, the services of Miss Silver are called in. She has her hands full with a room full of suspects all of which have a motive for murder.

Sara says

One of the best Wentworths. Beautifully handled plot. Emotionally damaged dictatorial matriarchs feature often in Wentworth's books - it's particularly satisfying to see the weaker characters rise up, show some guts, and turn the tables. The patriarch of this story is ironic, quixotic, and in the end quite lovable. I enjoy Wentworth's frequent use of the phrase "he thought a lot of" someone, meaning he valued that person. I often heard my parents use that phraseology when growing up in the USA in the 50s - they were born around the turn of the century and it's interesting that that expression was common also in the States in the 40s. Although definitely of their time, Wentworth's novels have an enduring humanity about them that is quite precious.

Jennifer says

The Clock Strikes Twelve by Patricia Wentworth is a delightful classic mystery, featuring Miss Silver, an elderly lady who knits and solves crimes. If that sounds like Agatha Christie's Miss Marple, then you are right on the money. Patricia Wentworth wrote 32 Miss Silver mysteries, which are sadly out of print. Fortunately, Open Road Media has republished all 32 novels in e-book format.

<http://www.openroadmedia.com/patricia...> I was lucky enough to get one of these through Net Galley.

The Miss Silver books are a must read for any fan of classic English mysteries. *The Clock Strikes Twelve* is a particularly wonderful example of her writing. James Paradine has gathered all of his nearest and dearest together for a New Year's dinner, during which he announces that he knows that one of them has been disloyal to the family. The guilty party will have until midnight to come to his study, where Mr. Paradine

will be waiting, and confess. Any reader of mysteries knows that, once he has uttered these words, James Paradine has virtually signed his own death warrant. Suspicion falls on each family member in turn, sometimes more than once. Eventually, Miss Silver, who has a reputation as a private investigator, is called in to solve the mystery. Along the way, she adroitly she straightens out the side problems that have created several false leads and red herrings for the police.

Although it is a slight variation on the traditional English Country House mystery, which means that there is a limited pool of suspects, I was still guessing at the killer's identity until the big reveal at the end. A bit of romance is always a staple in the Miss Silver novels, which I find quite pleasant and not at all detracting from the main mystery.

Mo says

An old-fashioned whodunit, with lots of twists and turns.

Learnin Curve says

I know who did it! Wait? No I don't. Yes I do! Oh, hang on a second...

Wentworth really is the mistress of creating truly unlikable characters. You *want* this person to be the victim, or that person to be the murderer, and every character is very well rounded out. A lot of it is to do with her not being in a hurry to kill the victim off. I think it works a lot better than the traditional method of learning about them as the detectives do, no need to spend time slowly learning who the victim was and why, we know the who and we can guess the why, but can we? With Wentworth our first guess might be right or it might be the seventh guess, but it will certainly be Miss Silver's first.

Robyn says

Again, not truly a four-star book, but by comparison with Wentworth's later novels this is so much better that it has to be marked out positively in some way. | More legitimate suspects than in many Miss Silver novels, though before the murder had even occurred I had figured out the killer. A satisfying ending, creepy if you get to thinking about the psychology of one of the characters. The usual romantic alliances.

Vanessa Delamare says

I confess to having a soft spot for GA novels, even if they are not the ones I read the most. My first steps in the world of investigation were done with Agatha Christie - Poirot especially, but also Miss Marple - and I find and enjoy here the same spirit and the same kind of character.

Talking characters, Miss Silver is a very nice old lady despite her very schoolteacher side - a very useful side however to get people talking. She is a true romantic judging by her penchant to help lovers. I like the fact that Miss Silver is knitting when she wants to question a person, it puts people at ease and gives them the

impression they're having a mundane discussion even though she worms the truth out of them! As for the other characters, they are very well written, briefly described but very realistic, even if they are sometimes on the edge of caricature (especially the constables).

Like any good Golden age novel, the decor is very cheesy, very... red. Gold decorations, curtains and all that ostentation give a decor in which I won't live but, for me, it's like a guilty pleasure: yes, I love these old-fashioned decor! The bombastic and pompous relations are also a strong point of these novels and Wentworth plays excellently this card. The strength of this book is the impression that one has to be in the house, to live this mystery at the heart of the investigation, to be part of the family. If you like Downton Abbey (ah... the decor, the famous British phlegm and the formal relationships ...), you'll love this book.

As to the investigation itself, it is a classic whodunit. Namely, you can discover the culprit for yourself because the clues are revealed throughout the investigation. There is therefore no great surprise at the end - unless taken in the pleasure of the story, you have forgotten to guess! But what's the purpose of a thriller if we know the end before the end? But simply, dear reader, because the pleasure is not ONLY in the discovery of the culprit - even if it's always enjoyable to have found whodunit! - but in the relationships between the characters, in the humor distilled in the book, in the background, in social conventions, dialogues and characters. To read such a novel, it's like looking through the hole in the little mouse's house and see how the investigation is going, it's to be at the heart of the action without actually being in it and have the chance to find the culprit before Miss Silver - and that part is not won!

In a nutshell

A great book, very well written with engaging characters. Miss Silver is unquestionably a "armchair detective" to know. I recommend this book for anyone who wants to spend a little time in good company and, as icing on the cake, the chance to find a culprit by yourself ... from your chair (who says that Miss Silver does not sleep in you?)

<http://vanessa-s-bookshelves.blogspot...>

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Clock Strikes Twelve (Miss Silver #7), Patricia Wentworth

Night Fury says

*The clock strikes twelve
All the people cry 'O Hell!'
A bomb's been flung
On the family interests which has wrung
Out the secrets, mysteries, unsolved fantasies
Claimed shame, and fame, but who's to be blamed?
Defiance, Distrust, Diabolical schemes
Are being coaxed in their heads...
And all this time, with that sardonic pride*

*Awaits the one in the Study room...
He can wait all he wants... but who's to come?
Don't bet all your cards
Till the clock strikes twelve
And more than one man cries 'O Hell!'*

So the queer idea is that I'd devoured this lush descriptive read about 2 years ago. Having read and re-read it at various intervals I found it interesting every time.

There's the dominating, sardonic Mr James Paradine, a tall tower of resolution and that unbeatable personality you find in the 'rich' blooded men... All the characters are introduced in a flow with the central mystery *bang bang* in with a finality. There's nothing more to say except that the Clock Strikes Twelve is no wonder a fantastic read when you really want to sink in with a cup of coffee and of course, the read itself.

The story and its highly developed individuals, the clues... all add up to the Miss Silver 'thing' =)
I especially like the so realistic way the writer portrayed the ever-closing knit of distrust, shock, suspicions they experienced as the book proceeded. And other more unexpected surprises...

Though frankly the appearance of this 'dowdy serenely knitting governess' only made its way in thru about half the book; I'd really have preferred lesser of the sometimes boring details, and more of that zing...

Anyhow, I've no remorse and by the end of the way, in fact, I'm glad I read this art.

(view spoiler)

Michelle says

Wentworth really turned a corner with her writing in this one. The setup is laid out very tightly in the first few chapters, and there are none of the cockeyed cliches of the earlier novels. I was pretty excited at the beginning that this was going to be a really great mystery. Sadly, I guessed the murderer right off, and though there were some twists and turns, it just wasn't all that clever. Added to that, Wentworth is still sticking in her sexist 40s stereotypes of sweet weak-willed héroïnes and moody grunting men. The Miss Silver mysteries remain diverting but not classic.

Silvio111 says

Now I finally appreciate Miss Silver. After reading #1 in this series, I was not impressed with her personality. But The Clock Strikes Twelve is #7, and Miss Silver truly engages with the people she is investigating, and her character has been filled in quite a bit more since the beginning of series. The plot in this one is pretty good with many twists and turns, and none of the characters made me cringe, although I did get a bit tired of the author impressing me with the red color scheme in Mr. Paradine's home.

All in all, a great read.

S Dizzy says

"Why don't we tell the truth?" She was looking up into his face. His eyes avoided her. He said, "Do you know what it is?" Then, almost violently, "Have you forgotten what he said in that damned speech of his? He accused one of us of a crime. That's what it amounted to, didn't it - he accused one of us - one of the ten people who'd been dining with him. And he said he'd wait in his study for one of us to come and confess. Well, he waited, and he was murdered. Do you think Vyner's going to look outside of those ten people for the murderer?"

Just finished the last words....Wow! What diabolical cunning.
